REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application. Claims 6 and 7 are withdrawn from consideration in response to an election requirement. Claims 1, 10, 12, and 13 are in independent form. Claim 1 is generic to all species of the invention.

Applicant was required, pursuant to 35 USC 121, to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits should no generic claim be held finally allowable. Applicant, hereby confirms its prior election to prosecute the species represented by Figures 1-2 and Claims 1-5 and 8-15 should a generic claim not emerge as allowable. Accordingly, Claims 6-7 are withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. Nevertheless, the Applicant respectfully submits that generic Claim 1 is allowable for the reasons presented below, and as such Claims 6-7 are likewise now presented in condition for allowance.

The claims stand rejected under 35 USC §112 for various ambiguities and informalities. In particular, Claim 8 is objected to because of a typographical error omitting the word "and". Appropriate correction has been made.

Claim 14 is considered indefinite because the word "concentric" is deemed unclear. Applicant has overcome this objection by amending Claim14 to include a reference axis which is defined by the dynamic sealing interface. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to Claim 14 provide a definite relationship between the axis of concentricity and the various claimed features. Accordingly, it is believed that the objections and rejections based on Section 112 have been overcome.

Claims 1-5, 8 and 10-15 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Tripathy '158. The Tripathy '158 patent discloses a unitary style PTFE dynamic seal

in which one-piece PTFE element establishes a dynamic sealing interface with an opposing wear sleeve in two different dimensions (i.e., a radial dimension and a cylindrical dimension).

Tripathy '158 fails to disclose the novel aspects of the subject invention as now distinctly recited in the amended independent claims. In particular, Tripathy '158 fails to disclose an annular support member made of a resilient polymeric material which extends outwardly from the carrier to define a flexible annular supporting surface. Tripathy '158 further fails to disclose a PTFE seal which is partially backed by the flexible annular supporting surface, with a portion thereof freely extending past the annular supporting surface so that it is unreinforced. According to the subject invention, its first (supported) and second (unsupported) sealing portions simultaneously engaged the rotating surface to establish the dynamic seal; this is not taught by Tripathy '158. Only the first sealing portion of the subject invention remains backed and reinforced by the flexible annular support member; again this feature is not taught by Tripathy '158.

The Tripathy '158 patent fails to disclose the claimed novel arrangement of components. Likewise, it fails to suggest the claimed invention.

Referring specifically to amended independent Claims 1, 10 and 12-13, the subject invention distinctly recites a structural relationship between the resilient, polymeric annular support member (24) and the PTFE seal (32). The support member (24) acts as a bridge between the rigid carrier (18) and the PTFE seal (32). Unlike prior art bridges, the subject flexible annular support member (24) includes an extending lip (28) containing the support surface (30) upon which the PTFE seal (32) is directly connected. The lip (28), however, backs only a first portion (34) of the subject PTFE seal

(32), while a second portion (38) of the PTFE seal (32) freely extends past the annular supporting surface (30) of the lip (28). Thus, while both the first (34) and second (38) sealing portions of the PTFE seal (32) simultaneously engage the corresponding rotary surface (either a rotating shaft, wear sleeve, or the like), only the first sealing portion (34) is backed and reinforced by the flexible lip (28). By this construction, varying degrees of flexibility and responsiveness are exhibited between the first (34) and second (38) sealing portions of the PTFE seal (32). As a result, certain sealing conditions can be better addressed and improved sealing functionality can be achieved in various applications.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tripathy '158 in view of Japp '136 and Brandt '112. Claim 14 depends from independent Claim 13. For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 13 is presented herein in condition for allowance, and that as a result dependent Claim 14 is also presented in allowable form. Nevertheless, the Applicant notes that neither Japp '136 nor Brandt '112 teach the formation of a notch or groove in a PTFE seal. Furthermore, none depict the novel configuration wherein the notch is interposed between first (supported) and second (unsupported) sealing portions in the PTFE seal, as claimed. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the cited combination of references is not sufficient to obviate Claim 14, together with base Claim 13 as herein presented.

Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

It is believed that this application now is in condition for allowance. Further and favorable action is requested.

The Patent Office is authorized to charge or refund any fee deficiency or excess to Deposit Account No. 08-2789.

Respectfully submitted,

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